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OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

With respect to the

Poor, Vagrants, and Houses
of Correction.

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L O N D O N :

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE proceedings took their rise in the House of Commons on the 27th of March, 1775, when, after representing the distresses of the poor, the improper and ineffectual application of the immense sums raised for their support, and the imperfections in many of the present laws upon that subject; a motion was made for appointing a committee to take the same into consideration: the house heard it with that attention which the importance of the subject required, and made the order hereafter mentioned [A].

The Committee met on Friday the 31st of March, and proceeded to take the matters referred to them into consideration: after sitting several days, they formed the Twenty-Six Resolutions contained in the first report; and reported them to the House on Tuesday the 11th of April: the Committee resumed the consideration of those matters, on Wednesday the 3d of May, and made their second report to the House, of the Six other Resolutions, on the 11th day of May: all which Resolutions were, upon the 24th

day of May, agreed to by the House, and are hereafter stated [B].

On the 11th of April, the House made the Orders [C] [D], hereafter stated, for returns of the proceedings, and state of the Houses of Industry, Workhouses, and Houses of Correction.

On the 17th day of May, the House made the order [E], for the returns to be made according to the forms contained in the second report.

The object of this Plan for the relief of the Poor, is to employ those who are able to work, to cherish and support the aged and impotent, and to nurse and educate to labour and habits of industry the infants who have lost their parents, or whose parents are unable or unwilling to maintain them; to punish the idle, disorderly, and profligate, by confinement and hard labour; and to inculcate in the minds of every one principles of religion and morality.

The attainment of these great ends will, it is presumed, not only communicate happiness to many thousands of people in distress, but excite a spirit of industry in the country, and send many to the manufactures who are at present employed in practices destructive to themselves, and pernicious to civil society; and moreover,

over, be the means of reducing the poor's taxes considerably, which are at present an intolerable burden to the landed property.

If this Plan has any merit, it consists in its simplicity, by only reviving the principles and spirit of a good old law, the Act of the 43d of Queen Elizabeth, which was formed with great wisdom, after much deliberation, and penned by a very able hand; but the provisions of that act have unhappily, in a great measure, lost their force, through the misconduct of overseers, and the frauds and abuses which have been practised about settlements and removals, the objects of many subsequent acts.

The intent of this Plan is to enforce, by prudent and practicable regulations, suited to the present situation and temper of the people, the execution of that law of Queen Elizabeth, according to its original intent, without introducing any new principles. The reader will find the power of the justice of peace, given by that act, continued in all respects; his trouble much eased in many, and those the most irksome and disagreeable; I mean in the applications for relief from poor objects in distress, complaining of their hardships, and, sometimes with too just cause, of ill treatment from the overseers.

The appointment and power of overseers is also continued ; but under such checks as, it is hoped, will prevent any abuse of it.

The method of raising money for the relief and employment of the Poor, by taxation of the inhabitants and occupiers of lands, &c. is likewise continued.

The great alteration by the proposed plan will be, the maintaining and employing the Poor, chiefly within the houses to be provided for their reception, instead of doing it within the narrow limits of the places to which they belong ; and the introducing two new descriptions of officers, *viz.* Governors, and Guardians, in order to facilitate the execution of it. If this takes effect, there will be no disputes about settlements, except between counties or districts incorporated by special acts of parliament ; and it is apprehended, if these regulations shall be so enforced, as to bring every one able to work to proper employment, which is their great object, the able poor will not only earn sufficient for their own maintenance, but contribute something, from their labour, to support the impotent. Whenever that shall be the case, it will be of little or no use to remove any from the counties or districts where they reside ; the laws about settlements and removals, which are very numerous, will

will then gradually fall into disuse, and may in time be repealed, in order to take them out of the statute books.

Provisions with respect to idle, disorderly persons and common beggars, which are the object of the Statute made in the 17th of King Geo. II. are so essentially necessary, and so much connected with these considerations about the poor, that this great plan cannot be complete, without establishing, at the same time, though by a different act, every wise and prudent regulation which can be formed, concerning those persons.

That these proceedings, most important in their nature and extent, may undergo the fullest consideration, before the next session of parliament; when Bills are intended to be offered to the legislature upon the plan here represented; the following Observations are submitted, to explain such parts as may not be clearly comprehended under the short descriptions contained in the Resolutions.

ORDERS

ORDERS and RESOLUTIONS.

Order [A.]

“ That a committee be appointed to review
 “ and consider the several laws which concern
 “ the relief and settlement of the poor, and the
 “ laws relating to vagrants ; and also the state of
 “ the several houses of correction, within that
 “ part of Great Britain called England ; and
 “ report the same, with their opinion thereupon,
 “ to the House.”

Order [C.]

“ That the masters, governors, and officers,
 “ having the care and direction of the several
 “ Houses of Industry or Public Workhouses
 “ established by Acts of Parliament, specially
 “ made for the relief and employment of the
 “ Poor, within that part of Great Britain called
 “ England, do, on or before the 24th day of
 “ June next, transmit to the Clerk of this House,
 “ in order to be by him laid before this House,
 “ an account of the number of parishes in each
 “ district, city, town, or place, wherein any such
 “ House has been so established ; the money
 “ raised annually by such parishes under such
 “ Acts of Parliament within the last three years,
 “ or since such establishment, the expences for
 “ their

“ their buildings, and how and to what purposes
 “ such buildings are adapted; the number of
 “ Poor contained therein at Midsummer and
 “ Christmas in each year, distinguishing the
 “ Able, the Aged, Infirm, and Infant Poor, and
 “ also the number in each of those classes who
 “ died in each of such respective houses within
 “ each of the said years; how, and in what la-
 “ bour or manufacture the Poor have been em-
 “ ployed in each of such houses, and the annual
 “ amount of the net money earned by them; the
 “ annual expences in maintaining them, distin-
 “ guishing how much for food, clothing, and
 “ fuel respectively, and also how much for
 “ salaries and allowances to officers, and how
 “ much for other incidental expences within
 “ each of the said years, and also the amount of
 “ the money paid or allowed within the said
 “ parishes, in each of the said years, on account
 “ of the Poor who were not sent to the said
 “ Houses of Industry or Workhouses; likewise
 “ an account of what money has been borrowed
 “ by virtue of the said respective Acts, and how
 “ much thereof has been discharged within each
 “ of the said years, and what part thereof re-
 “ mains unpaid; and also copies of all their bye-
 “ laws, rules, orders, and regulations.

Order

Order [D.]

“ That the clerks of the peace and treasurers,
 “ or one of them, within the several counties,
 “ ridings, divisions, liberties, and precincts, and
 “ the town-clerks and treasurers, or one of them,
 “ in the several cities and towns corporate within
 “ that part of Great Britain called England, do
 “ lay before the justices of the peace for each
 “ respective county, riding, division, liberty,
 “ precinct, city, and town-corporate, holding
 “ quarter sessions of the peace at their next Mid-
 “ summer general quarter sessions, an account of
 “ the several sums of money expended within
 “ their respective jurisdictions for apprehending
 “ and also in passing of vagrants within the last
 “ three years, distinguishing each year, and also
 “ how much money has been expended in each
 “ of the said years, on account of the several
 “ houses of correction within their respective ju-
 “ risdictions; how many persons have in each of
 “ the said years been confined within such houses
 “ of correction, for employment in hard labour
 “ and correction; how, and in what manner
 “ such persons have been employed, and what
 “ net money has been earned by their labour
 “ within each of the said years; and that the
 “ governors and other persons having the care
 “ or management of the several houses of cor-
 “ rection,

" rection, do give all assistance and information
 " in their power in making up the said accounts;
 " and the justices of the peace, at their said
 " quarter sessions, within their respective jurisdic-
 " tions, are required to inspect and certify
 " the same to this House; and that the said
 " several clerks of the peace, town-clerks, and
 " treasurers, or one of them, do immediately
 " afterwards transmit such accounts and certifi-
 " cates to the Clerk of this House, in order that
 " the same may be by him laid before this
 " House."

Order [E.]

" That printed copies of the forms an-
 " nexed to the report, which upon Thursday
 " last was made from the Committee who were
 " appointed to review and consider the several
 " laws which concern the relief and settlement
 " of the Poor, and the laws relating to Vagrants,
 " and also the state of the several Houses of
 " Correction within that part of Great Britain
 " called England, be sent to the several persons
 " described in the last of the resolutions then re-
 " ported from the said Committee; and that
 " the said persons do make the returns required
 " by an order of this House of the 11th Day of
 " April last, according to the said forms, or as
 " near as conveniently may be."

Resolutions [B.]

1. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the laws relating to the poor, in that
 " part of Great Britain called England, are
 " defective, and the good purposes intended
 " by them in many respects prevented.
2. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the present method of regulating such
 " poor, in separate parishes and townships,
 " is in general ineffectual for their proper
 " relief and employment.
3. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the money raised for the relief of the
 " poor is a grievous, and, if no new regu-
 " lations are made, will be an increasing
 " burden upon the public.
4. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That a considerable part of such money is
 " expended in supporting litigations con-
 " cerning settlements.
5. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the employing of the infant and able
 " poor, in such works as may be suited to
 " their strength and capacity, will be very
 " beneficial to this kingdom.
6. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That if the disputes about settlements, and
 " removals

" removals of the poor between one parish
 " or place and another in the same county,
 " could be prevented; the great expence at-
 " tending such litigations would be saved;
 " the poor would have an easier access to
 " places where they might find employment,
 " and would avoid the cruel and severe treat-
 " ment which they frequently receive from
 " the contending parishes during such con-
 " test.

7. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That if the poor were to be maintained and
 " employed at one general county expence,
 " those disputes would in a great measure be
 " avoided; the spirit and intention of the sta-
 " tute made in the 43d year of the reign of
 " Queen Elizabeth would be promoted; and
 " the regulations and provisions therein con-
 " tained better enforced.

8. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the establishing proper houses and
 " buildings at such places in each county, as
 " shall be best situated for the reception,
 " accommodation, and employment of the
 " several poor persons proper to be sent thi-
 " ther; and for the convenience of their
 " being duly inspected and attended to, will
 " be the most easy and effectual method for
 " relieving the impotent, and employing the
 " able poor.

9. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That care should be taken, in the provid-
 " ing and establishing of such houses and
 " buildings, for properly classing and em-
 " ploying the several persons admitted
 " therein; for which purpose, and in order
 " to the establishing a system of good regu-
 " lations, it may be proper to inspect the
 " several bye-laws, rules, regulations, and
 " ordinances, constituted in the several
 " houses of industry and public workhouses,
 " established under special acts of parlia-
 " ment, within this kingdom.
10. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 " tee, That for the better government of
 " the said houses, and carrying the intended
 " regulations into execution, every person
 " having an estate of 100 *l. per annum* in
 " England, and 60 *l. per annum* in Wales,
 " shall be a governor of the poor for the
 " county wherein he resides, provided such
 " estate, or one half thereof, shall lie in
 " such county; and that there shall be one
 " general meeting of the governors for such
 " county, on a day and place to be fixed;
 " at which meeting they shall determine the
 " places where the buildings, before de-
 " scribed, shall be erected, and also what
 " parishes shall return their rates and ac-
 " counts, and have their correspondence
 " and transactions with each of such houses,
 " accord-

“ according to their situation and vicinity,
 “ as near as conveniently may be; which
 “ houses and parishes shall be distinguished
 “ by the name of the First, Second, &c.
 “ District: and that there shall be one annual
 “ general meeting of the governors at each
 “ of the said houses, on some certain day
 “ to be fixed; and also one monthly meeting
 “ of the said governors, at the same place,
 “ in the first week in every month, on a
 “ certain day to be appointed by them:
 “ and that such governors may at their
 “ annual meeting elect from time to time
 “ such other persons, residing in such coun-
 “ ty, and having estates of such value, in
 “ the dominions of Great Britain, as they
 “ shall think fit, to be governors; provided
 “ the numbers so elected shall not exceed at
 “ any one time a certain number to be
 “ limited for each county; which number
 “ shall at such first general meeting of the
 “ governors at large, be distributed between
 “ the several houses then to be fixed upon,
 “ as they shall think fit, and election made
 “ accordingly.

11. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 “ That the governors shall at their annual
 “ meeting appoint so many persons to be
 “ guardians of the poor, for the several pa-
 “ rishes, townships, and places, belonging
 “ to

“ to each house, as they shall think fit, hav-
 “ ing estates of 25 *l. per annum*, or oc-
 “ cupying lands, &c. of 50 *l. per annum*,
 “ within such county; but no person shall
 “ act as guardian within any parish, town-
 “ ship, or place, whilst he shall be church-
 “ warden or overseer of the poor for the
 “ same.

12. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 “ That there shall be a treasurer and clerk,
 “ and also a master and matron, appointed
 “ by the said governors for each of the said
 “ houses, at the First meeting of the go-
 “ vernors after the said houses shall be fit
 “ for the reception of the poor, and proper
 “ salaries allowed to each of them.

13. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 “ That the poor persons being lame, impo-
 “ tent, old, or blind, who are unable to
 “ work, or who cannot maintain themselves
 “ by their labour, but stand in need of re-
 “ lief, shall be sent from the respective
 “ parishes and places where they reside, to
 “ the said houses, and there accommodated
 “ with every thing suited to their several ne-
 “ cessities and occasions; and such of them
 “ who shall be able to work employed in la-
 “ bour suited to their strength and capacity.

14. “ That

14. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
" That the orderly and industrious poor,
" who, from accidental sickness, infirmities,
" or other unavoidable causes, shall be ren-
" dered unable to maintain themselves and
" their families by their labour, may have
" temporary relief from the overseers of
" the poor within the several parishes or
" places where such poor reside, with the
" approbation of Two or more of the said
" guardians, in such manner as shall be most
" suitable to their necessities.

15. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
" That such of the infant poor under the
" age of four years, who have lost their pa-
" rents, or whose parents are unable to main-
" tain them, and shall be willing to part
" with them, may, by the direction of Two
" or more of the said Guardians, be put
" out to nurse in that or some neighbour-
" ing parish, until they shall be fit to re-
" ceive instruction; and from that time,
" shall be sent to the house to which such
" parish or place shall belong, to be in-
" structed in all necessary duties, and em-
" ployed in such manner as shall be most
" suitable to their age and capacities.

16. " That

16. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
" That such of the infant poor above the
" age of four years, who have lost their
" parents, or whose parents are unable to
" maintain them, may, by the direction of
" two or more of the said Guardians, be
" sent to the house to which such parish
" or place shall belong, to be instructed in
" all necessary duties, and employed as
" aforesaid.

17. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
" tee, that each of such children respec-
" tively, when of proper age to be placed
" out apprentice, or to service, shall be so
" placed out by the Governors; but if at
" any time their parents shall apply to the
" Governors to have their children returned,
" before so placed out, and it shall be
" made appear to such Governors that the
" parents are able to maintain them, the
" Governors shall order them to be re-
" turned.

18. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
" tee, That the overseers of the poor shall,
" in the last week in every month, send to
" the treasurer of the house to which their
" parish or place belongs, according to the
" regulations aforesaid, a true account of

“ all the expences incurred relative to the
 “ poor, within such parish or place, for
 “ the four weeks next preceding the week
 “ in which such accounts shall be sent, af-
 “ ter the same respectively shall have been
 “ produced to two or more of the said
 “ Guardians, and allowed by them.”

19. “ That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 “ tee, That the treasurer and clerk shall
 “ make an account of all receipts and pay-
 “ ments within each month, to be laid be-
 “ fore the Governors, at their monthly
 “ meetings, and shall also make and lay
 “ before the Governors, at such meetings,
 “ abstracts of the expences incurred with-
 “ in the several parishes, by such relief or
 “ provisions aforesaid, pointing out the par-
 “ ticular object of such expences, for the
 “ better observation and consideration of
 “ such Governors.

20. “ That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 “ tee, That the Governors, at their monthly
 “ meetings, shall inspect and examine all
 “ such accounts; and if they find cause to
 “ suspect that there has been mismanage-
 “ ment, or any improper behaviour therein,
 “ they may order the persons concerned in
 “ such transactions to appear before them

“ at their next monthly meeting, provided
 “ the place where such matter arises shall
 “ not be more than ten miles from such
 “ house, and then and there inquire into
 “ the same upon oath, and make such or-
 “ der and regulation therein as to them shall
 “ appear just and reasonable: if the place
 “ shall exceed that distance, the said Go-
 “ vernors may grant an order for the per-
 “ sons so concerned to attend some neigh-
 “ bouring justice of the peace, at such
 “ time and place as he shall appoint,
 “ which shall be notified to the persons so
 “ concerned; and such justice shall, in like
 “ manner, inquire into the same, and make
 “ such order and regulation therein as to
 “ him shall seem fit.

21. “ That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 “ tee, That for carrying the several pur-
 “ poses aforesaid into execution, assessments
 “ shall be made, by order of the justices
 “ at their general quarter sessions of the
 “ peace, upon every parish, township, and
 “ place, within each county, according to
 “ the proportion of money raised within
 “ such parishes and places respectively,
 “ and applied on account of the poor,
 “ upon a medium of the seven preceding
 “ years; the mode of ascertaining the sums
 “ so raised to be particularly directed.

22. “ That

22. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 " tee, That the accounts from each of such
 " Houses shall be made up quarterly, and
 " laid before the justices of the peace for
 " the county wherein such houses are situ-
 " ate, at their general quarter sessions of
 " the peace; who shall inspect the same,
 " and make orders for the sums to be raised
 " within the succeeding quarter.
23. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 " tee, That no parish, township, or place,
 " shall be compelled to contribute more in
 " any one year than such average sum.
24. " That it is the opinion of this Commit-
 " tee, That if it shall be made appear to
 " the justices, at their court of general
 " quarter sessions of the peace, that a re-
 " duction may be made in the said several
 " assessments, and that such average sum
 " for any parish, township, or place, ex-
 " ceeds four shillings in the pound of the
 " annual value of the lands, tenements, and
 " hereditaments, within such parish, town-
 " ship, or place, upon a fair valuation
 " thereof, made by persons to be appointed
 " by such justices, at the expence of such
 " parish, township, or place, then and in
 " that case such court of quarter sessions
 D 2 " shall,

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“ shall, in all their orders for future assess-
“ ments, consider the average sum for such
“ parish, township, or place, at one fifth
“ part of the annual value of such lands,
“ tenements, and hereditaments, so to be
“ ascertained as aforesaid, instead of the ave-
“ rage sum so first settled.

25. “ That it is the opinion of this Commit-
“ tee, That each Riding in the county of
“ York, and division in the county of Lin-
“ coln, and each district, city, town, or
“ place, where more parishes than one are
“ incorporated for the relief of the poor,
“ by special acts of parliament, shall, with
“ respect to all the purposes of these intend-
“ ed regulations, be considered as distinct
“ counties.

26. “ That it is the opinion of this Commit-
“ tee, That these regulations shall not take
“ effect in any county, until ordered by two
“ parts in three of the persons qualified as
“ aforesaid to be governors, assembled at a
“ meeting to be held for that purpose, after
“ two months notice thereof given in the
“ public news-papers circulated in that
“ county, and signed by at least fifteen
“ persons so qualified.

27. “ That

27. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That the houses to be provided for the
 " general reception of the poor ought to be
 " limited by the act, so as not to exceed a
 " certain number for each respective county,
 " or the number for each county should be
 " ascertained by the act ; and that the gover-
 " nors should have power to borrow money
 " upon the credit of the poor's rates, for
 " providing and furnishing the necessary
 " buildings, and also for buying a conve-
 " nient stock of materials and utensils for
 " employing the poor.

28. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That all cities and towns which are coun-
 " ties of themselves, should be considered
 " as distinct counties ; but the qualification
 " of their governors should be less than
 " those required in the counties at large.

29. " That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 " That every person qualified to act as a
 " governor, ought to send his name and
 " place of abode to the clerk of the district
 " wherein he resides, at the first and every
 " annual meeting of the governors for that
 " district, or for every neglect to forfeit a
 " sum of money ; and that the clerk at every
 " such meeting shall produce a list, con-
 " containing

" taining the names and places of abode of
 " the governors so transmitted to him;
 " which he shall divide into twelve equal
 " parts, as near as may be, and the frac-
 " tional parts shall be distributed, by ad-
 " ding one to each month as far as they
 " will extend, beginning with the month of
 " January, and proceeding to each suc-
 " ceeding month: that the name of every
 " such governor shall be wrote upon a small
 " piece of paper, and put into a glass or box;
 " from whence the clerk, or some governor
 " present, shall draw so many names as
 " under such regulation shall belong to the
 " month of January, and in like manner for
 " each succeeding month; and the names
 " so drawn shall be entered by the clerk in
 " a book to be provided for that purpose;
 " but liberty should be given for one gover-
 " nor to exchange his month with another,
 " upon notifying the same to the clerk, and
 " having an entry made thereof in the said
 " book, one week at least before the monthly
 " meeting; and that every governor so drawn,
 " or exchanged, shall either attend such
 " monthly meeting of the governors, or for-
 " feit a sum of money; but in case any go-
 " vernor, from sickness or any other una-
 " voidable cause, to be allowed by the
 " governors at such monthly meeting, shall
 " be

“ be unable to attend, and shall procure
“ another governor to attend in his place,
“ he shall be excused such penalty.

30. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
“ That the act, passed in the seventeenth
“ year of the reign of his late Majesty King
“ George the Second, intituled, “ An Act to
“ amend and make more effectual the Laws
“ relating to Rogues, Vagabonds, and other
“ idle and disorderly Persons, and to Houses
“ of Correction,” should be explained and
“ amended by a separate act, in such manner
“ as will be most likely to enforce the execu-
“ tion thereof, and prevent the practice of
“ begging in the streets and highways,
“ pernicious in its consequences, and highly
“ disgraceful to this country ; which practice
“ will be without the least excuse when these
“ regulations take place, by which the dis-
“ tresses of the poor will upon all occasions
“ be speedily and comfortably relieved ; and
“ the amendments should also be so adapted,
“ as to prevent impositions and abuses upon
“ the public in the apprehending and pas-
“ sing of vagrants.

31. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
“ That proper houses of correction should
“ be provided at the houses for the general
“ reception of the poor in every district, for
“ the

“ the more convenient inspection of the go-
 “ vernors; but so separated from the other
 “ buildings as to prevent any improper
 “ communication therewith; and that such
 “ rules, orders, and regulations, should be
 “ established within those houses of correc-
 “ tion, as may make them effectual for the
 “ purposes for which they were intended by
 “ the several laws now in being.

32. “ That it is the opinion of this Committee,
 “ That the several returns directed by the
 “ order of the house of the eleventh day of
 “ April last, to be made by the masters,
 “ governors, and officers, having the care
 “ and direction of the several houses of in-
 “ dustry, or public workhouses, established
 “ by acts of parliament specially made for
 “ the relief and employment of the poor
 “ within that part of Great Britain called
 “ England; and by the clerks of the peace,
 “ town clerks, and treasurers, within the
 “ several counties, ridings, divisions, liber-
 “ ties, precincts, cities, and towns cor-
 “ porate, within that part of Great Britain
 “ called England; and the certificates of
 “ the justices of the peace; should be made
 “ according to the forms hereunto annexed,
 “ marked [F] and [G].”

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS.

THESE five Resolutions, and the facts they contain, being self-evident; it is unnecessary to take up the time of the reader by any explanation of them.

Resolu-
tions
1, 2, 3,
4, 5.

The Sixth and Seventh, propose a very essential alteration, by taking the government and employment of the poor out of the hands of the overseers, and placing them in larger bodies, under the immediate care of persons well qualified for that important trust; and under the inspection of gentlemen, who, it is hoped, will be moved, from principles of humanity, as well as interest, to give their attention to so great an object.

6, 7.

Those who know of what persons overseers are generally composed, will not be surprised

E

that

that there appears so little order or œconomy in the management of the Poor; but were they better qualified, the narrow limits of parishes and townships are in general too small to support the expence of a workhouse, with such a governor to superintend it, as is fit for that employment; and even in places where workhouses have been provided (except in very large and populous parishes) they have for the most part rather increased than cured the evil, from the want of proper regulations.

The bringing this into one general county expence, will give it many advantages preferable to the plan proposed to parliament ten years ago, for dividing counties into districts, and giving the option of incorporating to persons qualified for guardians within each district. This will more effectually prevent litigations about removals, as it makes no distinction of settlement within the same county: it will also give the Poor an opportunity of seeking employment any where within the county, without a certificate, which will enable many to gain a livelihood, who have at present the whole, or a considerable part of their subsistence, from the parish where they are settled; parish-officers rather choosing to subject their parishes to that burden, than give certificates under the present laws,

laws, which lay the certificated persons, their servants and apprentices, under particular restraints, from acquiring settlements by the ordinary means in other parishes. The Bill which was lately offered to parliament, but did not pass into a law, was intended to remove that inconvenience : but if the plan now under consideration, which was suggested after that bill took its rise in the House of Commons, should take place, it will have the intended effect to the extent of the county wherein the pauper is settled ; and some expedient should be proposed, in the intended bill, to encourage industrious manufacturers and labourers, who cannot get employment in their own counties, to seek it in others.

A further advantage will arise from uniting the whole county in the common expence of building houses, and employing the poor ; as not only public spirit, but private interest, will excite the attention of every gentleman, to promote good order, and œconomy through the whole county,—a circumstance so much the more necessary, as the success of every plan of this sort, must entirely depend on the zeal and activity of the gentlemen where it is formed. Upon the plan before referred to, there might have been gentlemen within some of the districts very well disposed to see it executed ; but in other parts, for want of such assistance, it might either not

have been accepted, or if accepted, have fallen into improper hands, and become a grievance instead of a remedy to the evil it was intended to cure. In all counties where these sort of regulations have been partially introduced, many of the poor have found means to fly from the districts into the adjacent parishes, where they would be subject to less restraint; but upon the present plan no refuge of that sort can be taken.

8th and
part of 27.

The number and situation of the houses mentioned in these resolutions, deserve the utmost consideration:—their number should, in a great measure, depend upon the extent and populousness of the county. The returns ordered from the houses of industry, and work-houses, will be of use, to shew what numbers may be contained in houses of the magnitude and descriptions mentioned in such returns; but if the number of poor to be received into each, cannot be nearly ascertained, the different parts of the buildings may be so formed as to be enlarged without inconvenience: however, some general observations upon this head may be of use.—It seems expedient that each of these houses should contain as many poor, as can conveniently be managed under the care of one set of officers; with proper assistants, in the inferior departments: probably from five to eight hundred. Increasing the number of houses, unnecessarily, will add much to the expence;

as

as there must be the like number of superior officers,—probably with the like salaries, to each. *If* the number for each county can be limited, or rather ascertained, by the act, it may save trouble to the governors; and it seems fitter for the legislature, who comprehend the view and extent of their whole plan, to settle that point, than to leave it to the decision of the governors.

When the number of the houses is fixed, it is apprehended there will be little difficulty in ascertaining the places where they are to be built: proper regard will doubtless be had, to place them, if possible, near the most populous and manufacturing parts of the county, to facilitate the employment of the poor; and if it conveniently may be, near a navigable river, or canal, for the cheaper and easier conveyance of the materials for the construction of the building, and of every thing necessary for the support and employment of the poor.—Old mansions, if they can be purchased, and made fit for the purpose, will save expences. Where new buildings shall be found necessary, and there shall be waste lands in convenient situations, they will no doubt be attended to; as many acres may be taken at a reasonable price, under proper provisions in the act, the cultivation of which may find employment for some of the poor. They
probably

probably may be so fixed, that no part of the district shall be above twenty or twenty-five miles from the house: and few inconveniences will attend the most remote parishes, as the poor in general which are to be sent upon this plan, will continue for some time in the houses, and be conveyed at a general county expence; the charges of which are proposed to be fixed by the mile, in the act.

If the gentlemen to whom this plan shall appear eligible, when they have received the printed returns, from the houses of industry, and workhouses, hereafter mentioned, would consider upon the number of houses, and the places at or near to which they might be most conveniently fixed, within their respective counties, the number, and situation, for such counties might be specified in the act; which would save the trouble of the general county-meeting, and the governors might proceed, in all such cases, to carry the act into execution, as soon as it shall be passed.

9. 32.

In order to judge what buildings will be most convenient, and how the several apartments are to be disposed, it has been thought proper to call for returns, from the several houses of industry and workhouses, in different parts of the kingdom, of the nature and extent of their buildings,

buildings, and of the use of the several apartments contained therein, with many other particulars, respecting the maintenance, and employment of the poor, as will appear by the forms hereunto annexed : And in order to procure such returns in the most perfect and satisfactory manner, with the least trouble, not only to those who are to make them, but also to those who are to receive and inspect them, forms have been sent to the persons who are to make such returns, pursuant to the order herein before stated ; and extracts of the returns, when made, are intended to be printed, and sent to every member as soon as possible. It is hoped the gentlemen concerned, who have opportunity of observing them, will see that the returns are truly and faithfully made.

From these returns a tolerable judgment may be formed, of the success which has attended plans, in many respects similar to that now proposed ; but it is expected great improvements may be made, and a more perfect system formed, from the experience of those houses, and a due consideration of all the bye-laws, rules, and regulations which have been established in them.

In the intended act, it may be proper to direct returns of the like sort, to be made to the two Houses of Parliament every year ;

from whence the progress of this plan will appear, and the Legislature may see its defects, and correct them by subsequent acts.

These annual returns will shew where the best management prevails; and may serve to excite an emulation in the several districts, to excel each other in industry, good order, and oeconomy.

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12. 26.
29. and
part of
27.

These resolutions afford many essential provisions for carrying this plan into execution, and if attended to, will greatly facilitate the whole business.

There are several meetings of governors directed, viz. a general county meeting, for the purpose of determining whether this plan shall be carried into execution in that particular county; another for fixing the number of districts, and situations for the buildings, and allotting the parishes and places to each: this meeting will be unnecessary, in such counties as shall be prepared to have them named in the act: the only meetings after the houses shall be established, will be one annual general meeting, and a monthly meeting in each district; the annual meeting will be for the election of Guardians, and of such gentlemen as Governors who have not the requisite qualification within the county: many gentlemen, of great fortune,

fre-

frequently residing in counties, wherein they have little or no property, but would probably be induced to attend, and give assistance to this undertaking, if they were appointed governors. At the first of these meetings the buildings must be taken into consideration.

It was doubted, whether the monthly meetings would be sufficiently attended, by gentlemen who lived at a distance; and whether those who lived near, would not, in time, think the burden too great: this occasioned the mode of balloting, and obliging an attendance, under penalties, as described in the 29th Resolution; and it is hoped this will be effectual, without laying an unreasonable duty upon any gentleman, as no one will be obliged to attend more than one day in a year, with indulgencies, to avoid the penalty, upon sickness, or urgent business. This will bring a certain number of gentlemen from different parts of the district, to attend each meeting, fully sufficient, it is apprehended, to do the business; but others are not excluded, and will attend when they find it convenient. The calling gentlemen from different parts of the district, will have this further advantage, that if there are any grievances, or irregularities, within any part of it; they will probably have come to the knowledge

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of

of one or other of these gentlemen, who will be able to represent them at the meeting.

The business at the monthly meetings will chiefly be, the inspection of the accounts of the officers; the monthly accounts sent in by the overseers; the hearing complaints; making orders for proper persons to attend upon such complaints at the next meeting; and the superintendence of the several departments, within the house, to see that the rules, orders, and regulations, to be fixed by the legislature, and specified in a schedule to the act, are duly observed.

It may be found necessary at those monthly meetings, to nominate some few of the governors who live near the house, and shall be willing to undertake the duty, to attend once a week, as visitors, to see the rules and orders duly obeyed; and to report their observations to the next monthly meeting.

12. Much will depend upon the choice of good officers to attend these houses, which will be difficult to be effected in a popular election; but if that power and all other business to be done at a general county meeting (except the first

first contained in the 26th Resolution) could be vested in a committee of five or seven of the governors then present, to be chose by ballot, it might prevent many inconveniences; and such committee should have power to meet, and adjourn themselves from time to time, as they should think fit.

Whoever feels, or has seen, the distresses attending those described in this Resolution, and the hardships they are frequently exposed to, in travelling, under their infirmities, to justices of peace, to obtain orders on the parish officers for relief, will rejoice at this happy change of their condition; as it gives them a comfortable retreat, and subsistence, as the reward of their honest labour and industry; when they can no longer maintain themselves. 13.

This temporary relief may be often necessary, from sickness, or accidents; but should be administered with great prudence and impartiality; and under a very strict caution in the guardians, and a narrow inspection of the governors; for which purpose the accounts are required to be sent monthly to the clerk, or treasurer of the district; and examined by the governors at their next meeting. 14. 18, 19, 20.

15, 16,
17.

The happy effects of this care and education of the infant poor, proposed by these resolutions, are evident; and will, no doubt, be found in the rising generation, by comparing the assize kalendars, with those of former times.

21, 22.

The mode of raising the annual sum, by assessing the parishes, upon a medium of what they have paid for the same purposes, within the last seven years, seems equitable and just; and has been found very convenient, and practicable, within the several districts, where a number of parishes have been united; and seems preferable to the raising this money, by an equal pound rate through the county; which would, it is apprehended, create much jealousy and discontent.

23.

As the poor's rates, in most parts of the kingdom, have been gradually increasing within the last seven years; every parish will have satisfaction in finding, that they cannot be augmented for the future; and those, where that increase has happened, will find immediate relief, under this new regulation, by paying only the average sum.

24.

It has been represented, that the poor's rates, within some parishes, in different counties, amounted to above a third part of the value of their lands; which occasioned this resolution, by

which the equitable intention of the said statute of the 43d of Elizabeth, authorising a taxation of other parishes, within the county, in aid of any parish, which should be found unable to maintain its own poor, is effectually carried into execution; but as the reduction of the average sum, in the beginning of these new regulations, might, in some counties, occasion a deficiency of the fund, and so far defeat the purposes of the act, it was thought proper to postpone that relief, till a reduction of the general rates within the county can be afforded, which will be sooner or later, as the discharge of the debt, to be contracted on account of the buildings, shall be accelerated or retarded: in order to avoid disputes on that head, it may be prudent to direct in the Act, that a certain sum, *viz.* five or ten pounds *per cent.* of that money shall be paid within each year, till it shall be discharged; if the rates and payments under the new Act will admit thereof; and that no greater payment shall be made.

The poor's assessments in many parts of the kingdom are taken from old pound rates, when the lands were probably in a much inferior state to what they now are; amongst such it is apprehended few parishes will be found to pay above four shillings in the pound, according to the present full improved annual value of their
lands.

lands. The method prescribed by this resolution, of having them estimated by judicious persons, to be nominated by the court of quarter sessions, at the expence of the parish, will, it is apprehended, prevent any frivolous or unnecessary applications.

Part of 27. It is apprehended this power ought to be confined to the buildings and furniture only, and that the stock of materials and utensils for employing the Poor should be provided out of the annual income.

If this plan shall be executed with that prudence and œconomy which, from the intended provisions of the act there is reason to expect, it cannot be doubted but the poor's rates will be very soon reduced in a considerable degree: the saving expences about law-suits, and parish-meetings, and the produce from the labour of the Poor, must occasion a considerable alteration in the annual accounts, even in the beginning of these regulations: but it is not in human foresight to say to what extent that may be carried in process of time, by promoting industry, and effecting a change in the morals of the people.

30. This Resolution contains matter of great importance to the welfare and prosperity of the country. If the Act which it mentions be properly

perly amended and effectually enforced, we may expect to see order and authority restored, and a proper subordination established.

The number of persons tried for offences against the laws of their country within the year, will shew us how much we are consulting the happiness of a set of miserable beings, while we are studying to prevent their wicked practices; which generally take their rise in idleness and smaller offences, and gradually increase, till they bring them into the most deplorable situation.

This, it is apprehended, cannot be more effectually done, than by the methods proposed by this Resolution, *viz.* the punishing them, in the first stage of their degeneracy, for living in an idle and disorderly manner, without employment; by confinement and hard labour, until they shall be sufficiently reformed.

The punishing rogues and vagrants, by whipping, and afterwards sending them to the places of their settlement, from county to county, under the above act, at the public expence, by passes, was meant as a correction for their idleness and profligacy; and to prevent their begging on their way; but this punishment is very seldom inflicted, and the conveying them by passes has been abused to the
greatest

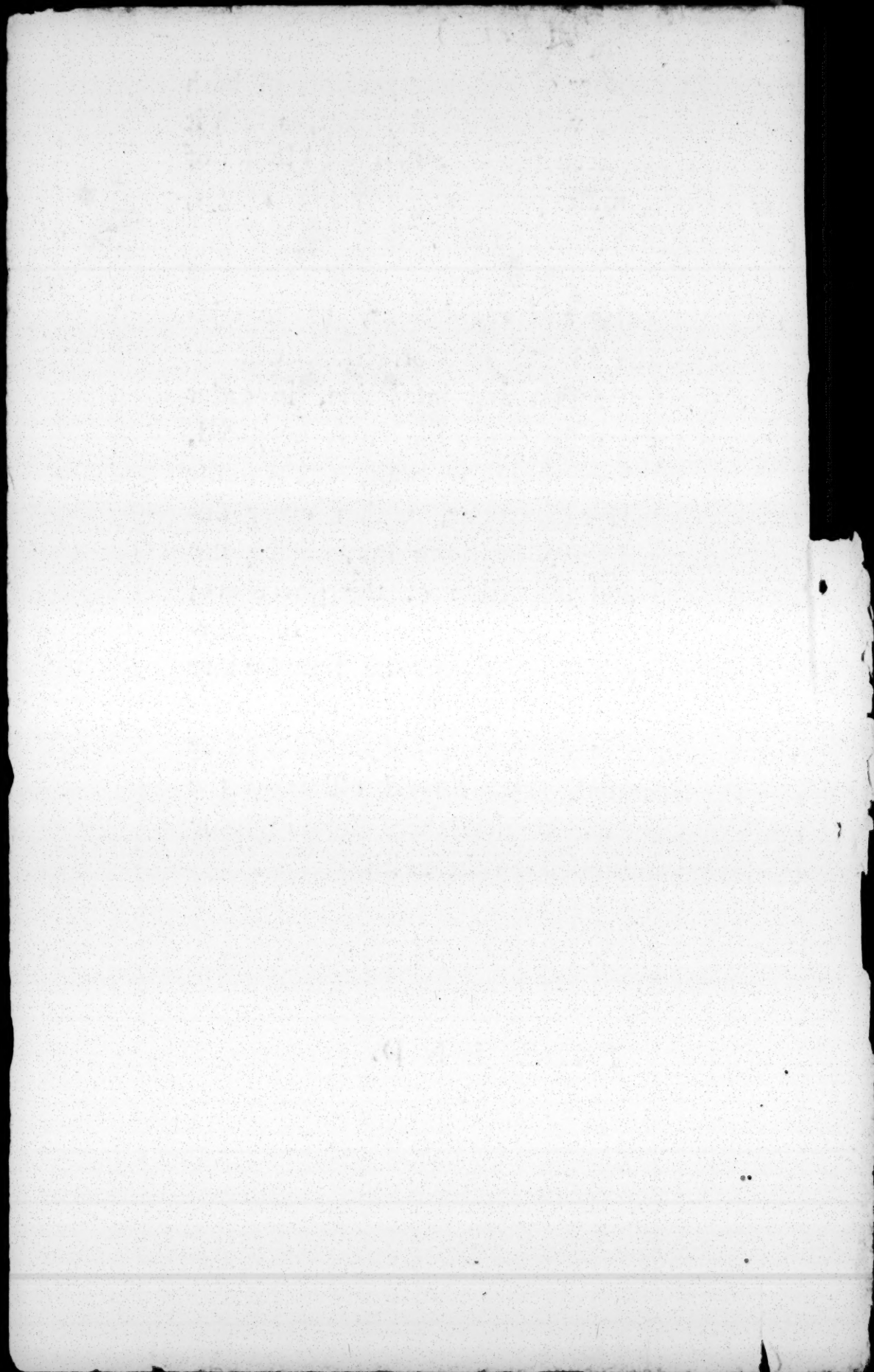
greatest degree; the counties are now put to an immoderate expence, in conveying persons by passes who did not by any means come within the intent of the Act; this expence, the returns called for by the house of commons will ascertain. It is a common practice to send paupers, who have committed no act of vagrancy, by passes, instead of orders, to save expence to the parish removing, where their settlement happens to be at a considerable distance. Some get travelling passes, signed by a magistrate, generally of some corporate town, under which they beg, or rather extort money, from parish officers; who are induced to give it them for fear of worse consequences, upon their promise to quit that place immediately. Others procure themselves to be sent by passes, to places remote, where they have no settlement, for reasons best known to themselves; and the money given for apprehending them, too often facilitates the means of this imposition upon the public, by rewarding some accomplice in the fraud.

31. Houses of Correction, when put under proper government and regulation, will be of infinite use for enforcing the law above mentioned. The returns required by the House of Commons, with respect to them, will, it is apprehended, shew that the persons confined there, have not been employed as they ought; the
 putting

putting a number of dissolute persons, of both sexes, together, without employment, which it is feared has been the case in most Houses of Correction, must produce the worst effects, both to their health and morals.

As the rules and regulations, to be established for the Houses of Correction, will require great attention and inspection, in order to have them duly enforced; it is proposed, that one of them should be built, at the house of reception for the poor, within every district, that they may be more immediately under the eye and inspection of the governors; perhaps a number of these Houses of Correction in each county will be found more convenient and less expensive, than if there was only one in a county; but they should be entirely separated, and fenced off from the other apartments, so that there should not be the least communication therewith.

T H E E N D.



RETURN from the Governors, &c. (*describing the Officers who make it*) of the House of Industry
(or) at the City of _____ consisting of _____ Parishes, incorporated by Act of Parli
the Honourable the House of Commons on the 11th Day of April, 1775.

The Average Amount of the Poores Rate when this House was first established.	Years enquired after, ending the Day of	Money raised by the Poores Rates within each of those Years.	Number of Poor at Midsummer in each Year.				Ditto at Christmas in each Year.				Total Number of the Poor in each Year, from the Medium of the two Numbers.	Number of Poor who died in each Year.				Expences of maintaining those Poor with Food, Clothes, and Fuel, in each Year.			
			Able.	Infirm.	Infants under the Age of 8 Years.	Total.	Able.	Infirm.	Infants under the Age of 8 Years.	Total.		Able.	Infirm.	Infants under the Age of 8 Years.	Total.	Food.	Clothing.	Fuel.	Total.
	1772																		
	1773																		
	1774																		

The Buildings are made of Brick, which cost about _____ per Thousand, laid down at the Place
(Or) of Stone, which cost about _____ per Cube Foot, laid down at the Place, before worked.
They are in the whole, upon an Average, about _____ Feet in Length, _____ in Depth, and
They consist of _____ Apartments (*specifying the Dimensions and Use of each.*)
They are found to be large enough to accommodate _____ Persons.
The able Poor have been employed in _____ and the Infant Poor

The Officers and their Salaries are _____

Copies of all the Bye-Laws, Rules, Orders, and Regulations, which have been made for the Good

Dated the _____ Day of _____ 17

F.)

dustry, Workhouse, &c. (as the Case shall be) at in the County of
 Parliament, passed in the Year 17 for (here insert the Title of the Act) to the Order made by

Total.	Allowed in each Year to Poor kept out of the House.	Salaries and Allowances to Officers in each Year.	Other incidental Expenses in each Year, including Interest.	Total Expenses within each Year.	Net Money earned by Labour in each Year.	Expences of the Buildings.		Expences of the Furniture.		Total Money borrowed.		Discharged of the Debt.		Remained of the Debt at the End of the three Years.
						Before the three Years.	Within each of the three Years.	Before the three Years.	Within each of the three Years.	Before the three Years.	Within each of the three Years.	Before the three Years.	Within each of the three Years.	

the Place.
 worked.
 depth, and Feet in Height.

Infant Poor in

aries are as under.

for the Government of the said House, and which are now in Force, are transmitted herewith.

To be signed by the Persons:
 making the Return.

(G.)

RETURN from the Clerk of the Peace (*or Town-Clerk*) and Treasurer, for the County, Riding, &c. (*as the Case shall be*) of to the Order made by the Honourable the House of Commons, on the 11th Day of *April*, 1775.

Years en- quired after, ending the Day of	Expences concerning Vagrants in each Year.		Number of Persons sent to the House of Correc- tion in each Year, for Correction or Employ- ment in hard Labour.	Medium Number of Persons un- der that Description who were, on an Average, kept the whole Year within the Work-house, as near as the same can be computed.	Expences relative to such Persons within each Year.	Net Money earned by their Labour within each Year.
	For apprehend- ing them.	For passing them.				
1772						
1773						
1774						

The above Persons have been employed in

To be signed by the Clerk and Treasurer.

WE the Justices of Peace assembled at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace for
on the Day of 1775, do certify that we have inspected the above Return,
and apprehend the same to be true.

To be signed by the Justices present.